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Abstract of the national paper of Mexico

I. General

1. Mexico uses space technology for peaceful purposes as part of its strategy to promote national development. The main applications of this technology are to be found in the following fields: air and marine navigation, telecommunications, economic and social development, national capacity-building in formulating strategies geared to sustainable development and in solving problems in the fields of health and education, in the environmental sphere and in the areas of prevention and disaster relief.

2. With regard to space laws and regulations, Mexico believes that the strengthening of the legal regime governing outer space under equitable conditions constitutes for all States a further guarantee of the peaceful uses of outer space. It has accordingly supported bilateral and multilateral efforts and made significant strides in adapting its domestic legislation to the development of new applications and activities in the utilization of space resources. For Mexico, cooperation in science and technology represents a key tool in ensuring for States the most balanced access to technologies that will enable them to make effective use and maximize the benefits of space resources. Mexico thus considers that the promotion of knowledge of outer space and its technological applications should be encouraged both nationally and internationally, as part of the cultural heritage of present and future generations, fostering a comprehensive and integrated vision of the environment and a greater awareness of the potential uses of this resource and the need to preserve it.

II. Satellite development

3. Using the features of the geostationary orbit, Mexico has since 1985 placed in orbit six satellites belonging to three generations: (a) first generation: Morelos I (113.5° W; date of launch: June 1985; end of life: March 1994) and Morelos II (116.8° W; date of launch: November 1985; still in inclined orbit); (b) second generation: Solidaridad I (109.2° W; date of launch: November 1993; end of life: 2007), Solidaridad II (113.0° W; date of launch: October 1994; end of life: 2008) and the placing in Earth orbit of the UNAMSAT-B satellite from the Plesetsk launch site in Moscow by the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM) on 5 September 1996; and (c) third generation: Satmex 5 (116.8°; date of launch: December 1998; end of life: 2013).

III. Space activities

4. In November 1985, a Mexican astronaut took part in a space mission for the first time during the mission to place the Morelos II satellite in orbit. On that occasion, various experiments designed by Mexican scientists were also carried out.

IV. Use of telecommunications in health care

A. Education for health: managerial training and continuing education

5. The Ministry of Public Education (SEP), the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) and UNAM are collaborating in the development of the managerial, academic and social subprogrammes in the areas of technology, legislation, finance and health education.

B. Telemedicine

6. Mexico has established a national telemedicine programme as one of the applications of telecommunications and information technology in the field of education. This programme is designed to promote the exchange of knowledge between the more standard and the highly specialized units with a view to expanding the coverage of the services and enhancing their response capability and to making effective use of the resources allocated to the health services. As a world pioneer in telemedicine, our Government has been sharing its experience with France, Costa Rica and other countries.

7. The telemedicine programme was initiated in 1994, in Mexico City, at the 20 de noviembre National Medical Centre within the Institute of Social Security and Services for State Employees (ISSSTE). This programme, which came into operation in 1996, is aimed at developing a series of strategies and actions for the purpose of implementing the computerized interconnection system for the transmission and reception of data on medical treatment, teaching and administration by satellite or fibre-optic links.

V. Distance education programme

8. The distance education programme, which is operated on the Educational Television Satellite (Edusat) network of the Mexican Government was introduced in December 1995 with the aim of increasing the contribution of the communication and information media to efforts to bridge the educational gap and to expand the coverage and improve the quality of education. In order to achieve wider cover across the continent, the Edusat network uses the Solidaridad I and Satmex 5 satellites to link up with public and cable television, microwave, telephony and radio broadcasting systems.

9. The Edusat programme range, which is transmitted through eight channels, comprises cultural, social, scientific and educational topics designed to increase the knowledge of its viewers and provide them with entertainment. In Mexico, the Edusat network has 24,000 signal receivers installed at various educational centres, covering pre-school, primary, lower and upper secondary, technical, vocational, further, adult and continuing education and in-service training, for the benefit of children, young persons, parents and teaching staff.

VI. Outer space law

10. In 1996, the delegation of Mexico submitted to the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space a proposal for a review of the status of the

five international legal instruments governing outer space, with the aim of promoting the universality of outer space law through the implementation of appropriate measures to achieve greater accession by States to the international conventions in force. In 1997, following extensive consultations between Member States, the Legal Subcommittee included that proposal as a new item on its agenda.

VII. Regional centre for space science and technology education in Latin America and the Caribbean

11. On 18 August 1998, the *Official Gazette of the Federation* published the decree promulgating the agreement between the Governments of Mexico and Brazil concerning the establishment of a regional centre for space science and technology education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

12. Mexico is currently undertaking an analysis with a view to completing the requirements that will enable the centre to become fully operational in our country.